1. (unchanged) A method of decreasing the playing duration of speech generated from a text segment, comprising:

(a) counting syllables in each word of said text segment; and

(b) assigning a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on a total number of syllables in said word.

2. (unchanged) The method of claim 1, further comprising generating speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.

3. (unchanged) The method of claim 2, wherein said playing rate of a given generated word is increased where the playing rate indicator of said word is indicative of a higher number of syllables and slowed where the playing rate indicator of said word is indicative of a lower number of syllables.

4. (unchanged) The method of claim 3, further comprising decreasing the duration of pauses associated with selected punctuation in said text segment.

5. (unchanged) The method of claim 1, wherein said playing rate indicator of said each word is changed when a syllable count of said each word increases above a threshold number of syllables.

6. (unchanged) A method of decreasing the playing duration of speech generated from a text segment, comprising:

(a) performing a grammatical analysis of said text segment; and

(b) assigning a playing rate indicator to each word of said text segment based on said grammatical analysis.

7. (unchanged) The method of claim 6, further comprising generating speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.

8. (unchanged) The method of claim 7, further comprising decreasing the duration of pauses associated with selected punctuation in said text segment.

9. (unchanged) The method of claim 8, wherein said grammatical analysis comprises the identification of a part of speech of the words in the text segment.

10. (unchanged) The method of claim 9, wherein said playing rate indicator of said each word is set to reflect a slow playing rate for certain parts of speech and a fast playing rate for other parts of speech.

11. (unchanged) The method of claim 10, wherein said certain parts of speech comprise nouns.

12. (unchanged) The method of claim 11, wherein a word with a playing rate indicator of a slo playing rate is omitted from the generated speech.

13. (unchanged) A method of decreasing the playing duration of speech generated from a text segment, comprising:

(a) comparing each word of said text segment to an inventory of pre-selected words; and

(b) assigning a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on said comparison.

14. (unchanged) The method of claim 13, further comprising generating speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.

15. (unchanged) The method of claim 14, further comprising decreasing the duration of pauses associated with selected punctuation in said text segment.

16. (unchanged) The method of claim 15, wherein each said playing rate indicator of each word is set to reflect a slow playing rate when said each word matches an entry in said inventory.

17. (unchanged) The method of claim 16, further comprising omitting from the generated speech a word with a playing rate indicator indicative of a slow playing rate.

18. (unchanged) A computing device comprising:

(a) a processor;

(b) persistent storage memory in communication with said processor, storing processor readable instructions adapting said device to:

(i) receive a text segment;

(ii) count syllables in each word of said text segment; and

(iii) assign a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on a total number of syllables in said word.

19. (amended) The computing device of claim 18, wherein said process readable instructions further adapt said device to:

(iv) generate speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.

20. (unchanged) A computing device comprising:

(a) a processor;

(b) persistent storage memory in communication with said processor, storing processor readable instructions adapting said device to:

(i) receive a text segment;

(ii) perform a grammatical analysis of said text segment; and

(iii) assign a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on said grammatical analysis.

21. (amended) The computing device of claim 20, wherein said process readable instructions further adapt said device to:

(iv) generate speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.

22. (unchanged) A computing device comprising:

(a) a processor;

(b) persistent storage memory in communication with said processor, storing processor readable instructions adapting said device to:

(i) receive a text segment;

(ii) compare each word of said text segment to an inventory of pre-selected words; and

(iii) assign a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on said comparison.

23. (amended) The computing device of claim 22, wherein said process readable instructions further adapt said device to:

(iv) generate speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.

24. (unchanged) A computer readable medium storing computer software that, when loaded into a computing device, adapts said device to:

(a) receive a text segment;

(b) count syllables in each word of said text segment; and

(c) assign a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on a total number of syllables in said word.

25. (amended) The computer readable medium of claim 24, wherein said computer software further adapts said device to:

(d) generate speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.

26. (unchanged) A computer readable medium storing computer software that, when loaded into a computing device, adapts said device to:

(a) receive a text segment;

(b) perform a grammatical analysis of said text segment; and

(c) assign a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on said grammatical analysis.

27. (amended) The computer readable medium of claim 26, wherein said computer software further adapts said device to:

(d) generate speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.

28. (unchanged) A computer readable medium storing computer software that, when loaded into a computing device, adapts said device to:

(a) receive a text segment;

(b) compare each word of said text segment to an inventory of pre-selected words; and

(c) assign a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on said comparison.

29. (amended) The computer readable medium of claim 28, wherein said computer software further adapts said device to:

(d) generate speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.